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# Investigating the Influence of Mother Tongue Usage in English Classes on the Writing Skills of Third-Year High School Students at Si M'hamed Bouguerra Secondary School, Beni-Slimane, Médéa

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in English ( Linguistics).

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## DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the substance of our dissertation, entitled " Investigating The Influence of Mother Tongue Usage In English Classes on students' writing skill" presented for the degree of Master II in English (Linguistics), under the supervision of Dr. Zinai Samir is entirely the results of our investigation and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, to any institution for assessment purposes. Further, we have acknowledged all sources used cited in the reference We are aware that any practice of plagiarism will lead to failure of the dissertation and will be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Therefore, we are completely responsible for the content of this dissertation.

## Dedication

**We dedicate this humble work to :**

**Our beloved parents who supported us with their sincere prayers.**

**All "Bencherit", "Bouaichaoui" and "Yousfi" families.**

**Our dearest supervisor Dr.Zinai Samir for his guidance.**

**Special thanks to Dr.Ouafa Ouarniki.**

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## Abstract

The prevalence of language interference has become increasingly common among English as a foreign language learners. Students often employ their mother tongue as a tool to aid in the acquisition of the target language. This research aims to explore the impact of native language usage in English classes on the writing skills of students at Si M'hamed Bouguerra High School. The study seeks to identify significant findings derived from the utilization of the mother tongue in the classroom. To ensure the research's validity, a mixed methods approach was employed, involving the administration of questionnaires to both third-year high school students and their teachers. Additionally, students were requested to write short paragraphs. The collected results reveal that third-year secondary school students make various types of errors, stemming from both intralingual and interlingual factors. Consequently, it is confirmed that the mother tongue (Arabic) serves as the primary cause of learners' errors.



**Key Words:** Mother Tongue( Arabic), Target Language (English) , Native Language, Language Interference, English Language, writing skill.

**ملخص**

أصبح انتشار التداخل اللغوي شائعا بشكل متزايد بين متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية . غالبا ما يستخدم الطلاب لغتهم الأم كأداة للمساعدة في اكتساب اللغة الهدف . يهدف هذا البحث لاكتشاف تأثير استخدام اللغة الأم في أقسام اللغة الانجليزية على مهارات الكتابة لدى طلاب ثانوية سي محمد بوقرة . تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على النتائج الهامة المستمدة من استخدام اللغة الأولى في أقسام الدراسة خلال حصص اللغة الانجليزية . لضمان مصداقية البحث تم استخدام الأسلوب المختلط الذي يشمل إدارة الاستبيانات الموجهة لكل من طلاب السنة الثالثة ثانوي و معلميهم .كما طلب من المتمدرسين كتابة فقرات قصيرة . تكشف النتائج التي تم جمعها أن طلاب السنة الثالثة من المرحلة الثانوية يرتكبون أنواعا مختلفة من الأخطاء، ناتجة من عوامل داخل اللغة و عوامل بين اللغات .بالتالي فقد تم التأكيد أن اللغة الأم (العربية)هي السبب الرئيسي وراء أخطاء التلاميذ.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** اللغة الأم العربية .اللغة الهدف الإنجليزية .تداخل اللغة .مهارات الكتابة.

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**List of abbreviation:**

- **EFL:** English as Foreign Language.
- **L1:** First Language.
- **L2:** Second Language.
- **MT:** Mother tongue (Arabic).
- **TL:** Target Language (English).
- **TESOL:** Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- **NL:** Native Language.
- **CA:** Contrastive Analysis
- **EA:** Error Analysis

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

# General Introduction

## 1. Background of the Study

Language serves as a vital means of communication, facilitating interaction and the expression of ideas, thoughts, and beliefs. Renowned English phonetician and language scholar, Henry Sweet, aptly described language as the means by which ideas are conveyed through speech sounds, combined to form words, and further organized into sentences, representing the amalgamation of ideas into coherent thoughts. The mother tongue, being the primary language acquired by individuals from their immediate surroundings since birth, plays a pivotal role in shaping their linguistic development. On the other hand, the second language refers to the language acquired after one's native tongue, obtained through various channels such as formal education, instructional materials, books, and media.

When learning a new foreign language, learners often rely on their mother tongue as a tool to facilitate the learning process and to convey their background knowledge and ideas from their native language into the target language. However, this reliance on the mother tongue can pose challenges, resulting in interference that manifests in different aspects of language acquisition, including reading, speaking, and writing. Of particular interest in this study is the impact of the mother tongue, Arabic, on students' English writing skills. Given that writing is recognized as a complex and crucial skill, understanding the extent of mother tongue interference is of paramount importance.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Numerous studies have been undertaken to explore the influence of the mother tongue on language acquisition. Among those affected by this phenomenon, third-year high school students encounter significant challenges. Unquestionably, the reliance on the mother tongue has resulted in adverse effects on their written output. Consequently, it is imperative to address the issue of mother tongue usage or interference during the acquisition of a second language, particularly in the context of writing, with the aim of producing well-structured and comprehensible written work. Hence, the focus of this investigation centers on examining the impact of mother tongue usage in English classrooms.

### 3. Research Questions

This research aims to address the following questions:

a) How does the influence of the mother tongue impact the writing skills of third-year high school students?

b) Is the mother tongue considered a significant factor contributing to errors in English writing?

c) How can third-year secondary school students enhance their writing without relying on interference from the mother tongue?

### 4. Hypotheses

The researchers propose the following hypotheses:

a) The usage of the students' native language has a detrimental effect on the writing abilities of third-year high school learners.

b) The mother tongue is a major contributor to errors found in students' written productions.

c) Students should refrain from mentally translating from their native language to the target language and instead develop the ability to think directly in the target language to improve their writing without interference from the mother tongue.

### 5. Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

a) To assist students in learning and employing accurate language usage in their written work.

b) To examine the impact of the mother tongue (Arabic) on writing in a foreign language (English).

c) To shed light on the common errors made by third-year high school students in their writing compositions.

**6. Significance of the study**

It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of writing as a fundamental skill. Consequently, students are expected to enhance their proficiency in writing to create well-structured and comprehensible texts. However, the utilization of the mother tongue (MT) hampers and undermines the effectiveness of their written output. Therefore, investigating this issue is imperative for several reasons.

Firstly, the avoidance of mother tongue usage is a pertinent task that enables the production of formal, coherent, and impactful written pieces. Secondly, the interference of the native language has a detrimental effect on the development of students' writing skills, resulting in numerous errors. Thirdly, paragraphs serve as the framework for students' ideas and thoughts. Hence, they must acquire the necessary skills to construct coherent and cohesive paragraphs.

**7. Research Tools**

The case study was conducted among third-year high school students at Si M'hamed Bouguerra BeniSlimane Médéa to examine the hypotheses, gather essential information, and address the research questions. To accomplish this, a mixed method approach was employed. The research utilized a questionnaire administered to both students and teachers, as well as a written test administered to students. Subsequently, the data collected through these research tools were analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions.

**8. Structure of the Research**

The present research is structured as follows. It begins with a comprehensive general introduction that outlines the main components of the study. Subsequently, the research is divided into three distinct chapters.

Chapter 1 focuses on the literature review, which critically examines previous studies in the field pertaining to the impact of mother tongue usage in English classes. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the relevant scholarly work.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the research methodology and design. It delves into the practical aspects of the research, detailing the methods employed and the overall research design utilized to investigate the research questions and test the hypotheses.

Chapter 3 encompasses the results and data analysis derived from the research. This chapter not only presents the findings but also provides an in-depth analysis of the collected data. Additionally, it offers further suggestions and recommendations based on the results obtained.

# Chapter one

# Literature Review

## Introduction

Nowadays, in the era of globalization and technology, it has become necessary to speak more than one language. Learning foreign languages requires mastering the four essential skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Among these skills, writing is considered the cornerstone of communication and the framework of society. It allows writers to express their ideas, thoughts, and beliefs. Bacon emphasizes the significance of writing by stating, "Writing makes an exact man."

In the initial pages of the first chapter, we will provide clear definitions for key terms related to the topic, namely writing, the Target Language, and The Mother Tongue. Additionally, we will discuss the importance of writing and its main characteristics. Various scholars have conducted research to develop different approaches to facilitate the teaching of writing. In this chapter, we will focus on the most important approaches.

Considering that English is recognized as the global language and the language of development, we will specifically examine its status in the Algerian educational system. Furthermore, we will shed light on language transfer and its different types. Additionally, we will provide information about the notion of contrastive analysis and its relevance, along with error analysis, which encompasses two main types: intralingual and interlingual. Finally, we will conclude the literature review by explaining the influence of the Mother Tongue on English classes.

### 1.1 What is Writing

The most essential objective of learning foreign language is the ability to communicate which basically relies on four important skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills, while speaking and writing are productive skills.

According to Heick (2017) "writing is syntax, diction, thematic, development, idea organization, minor and major structure, clarity, and creativity. It is highly conceptual and extends across disciplines. It requires strong awareness of abstract concepts like purpose and audience, and perhaps more broadly of ideas like quality, aesthetics and styles. It is hard-work-cognitively demanding and accessible only through skill and reflects everything about the writer as well."

Writing is considered as the most difficult skill in which attention is needed particularly in foreign language. "Writing is more than socially embedded: it is socially constructive. Writing structures our relations with others and organizes our perceptions of the world" (Bazerman and Baradis, 1991.P.3).

Furthermore, Bell and Burnaby (1984) pointed out that "writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts" (P.36).

Nunan (2003) states that writing is an intellectual activity of delivering ideas, and thinking about how to express and organize them into sentences and paragraphs that people can clearly understand. Moreover, writing expresses the authors' conception of understanding the published issues (P.88).

### 1.2 The Importance of Writing

Writing is one of the crucial skills in which learners have to be perfect in. By mastering writing, learners will develop their writing efficiency, express their ideas clearly, and exchange their notions and thoughts with others. Writing has unlimited importance, the main fundamental once can be seen in the following points:

**a) Writing has an essential role in students' journey of learning by sharing knowledge and experience:** it clarifies ideas of the learners and forms bounds for themselves and others.

**b) It is considered as a means of communication that conveys information about specific subject:** this makes writing as the most important skill. If learners do not practice

writing they probably will find more difficulties in communication. Furthermore, it helps them to form clear and cohesive thoughts.

**c) It helps students to analyze and convey understanding, and helps them to improve their cognitive skills such as critical thinking:** scientifically, the right side of the brain is more creative then the left one which is more analytical and logical, and writing needs both sides. Also, it is considered as a cure for mental health disorders.

**d) Writing improves proficiency in a formal style and the language skills:** by figuring out which thoughts to keep in the brain that are more organized.

### 1.3 The Characteristics of Writing

- Any piece of writing requires to be coherent, added to that notions should be related in a logical way.
- The choice of words is considered as a main feature. Thus, it results in a well-constructed written.
- The piece of writing should be clearly defining the topic.
- It should be lucid and understandable.
- Relevance to the topic is an important characteristic that must be present.
- The writing should be properly organized and formal.
- Another feature is communication; it should communicate clearly and with authority.
- Any piece of writing should have a subject and purpose.
- The language, the style and the structure should be simple, direct, and natural.
- The writer should emphasize on using precise and suitable words.
- The writing should be grammatically correct with attention to avoid mistakes.
- The writer must respect that notions and ideas should flow smoothly.

### 1.4 The Main Approaches to Teaching Writing

Writing has a considerable value in today's modern life. It occupies a large part of peoples' lives especially in communication means. Furthermore, it is also required in present professional life. Despite the fact that people did not pay much attention on it. Therefore, many studies have been emerged in order to find the appropriate approaches to teach

writing. As cited in Methodology in TESOL, Zamel (1987) said that "writers who are ready to compose and express their ideas use strategies similar to those used by native speakers of English" (P.274).Researchers came up with five main approaches which are: the product oriented approach, the process oriented approach, the genre oriented approach, the free writing approach, and the controlled to free approach.

### 1.4.1 The Product Oriented Approach

The product approach is a traditional approach that put emphasis to the outcomes of learners' writing. It is a teacher-centered approach in which teachers supply students with materials. In this approach students are asked to imitate, copy, transform model and texts which are indicated by the teacher. Its main concern is to evaluate the final product of the students. Nunan (1989) stated that "The teacher who adopts product approach makes sure that the product is grammatically correct" (P.36).i.e. it deals with the structure and the form (grammar, syntax and mechanics).

According to steele (2004) there are four stages of teaching in the product approach: Familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing.

-Familiarization: students are concerned to do tasks and to highlight structures and vocabulary that they have practiced.

-Controlled writing: students do activities to practice the features extracted in the analysis of the model text. It focuses on grammatical features and related vocabulary.

-Guided writing: it is considered as the most essential stage in which students are asked to come up with text that is similar to the model one.

-Free writing: in this stage students will write similar text on their own.

Indeed, the product approach's five stages are crucial in which students should follow. In the first stage, learners will acquire some vocabulary and grammatical features that are given by the teacher. Furthermore, in the second stage students do tasks such as filling the missing sentences using the learned patterns. Concerning the third stage, the teacher will ask the students to write any piece of writing which is similar to the model one. Finally, in the free writing, learners apply their previous learned knowledge to write free paragraphs and essays.

This approach was criticized for its weaknesses such as the focus on the form and structures and the neglect of meaning. This led to the appearance of a new approach of teaching writing which is the process oriented approach.

### 1.4.2 The Process Oriented Approach

The process oriented approach emerged as a response to the product oriented approach for its inefficiency and disregarded of meaning. Nunan and Choi stated that the writing process is not the same as process writing, but since some of its guiding principles had an impact on the evolution of the process oriented writing. It is believed that it is helpful to present and overview the method. The technique was created as a counterbalance to the long-established mechanical and product-focused approach to teaching writing that has long dominated educational systems. Furthermore, with this method, which was based on behaviorist ideas, students were going to have examples to copy, because they would make blunders and new authors should not be allowed to write as they want . These errors need to be "unlearned", which would take time and efforts. This claim was disputed by proponents of the process writing on the grounds that it was mechanistic and behaviorism was an outdated understanding of how people learned.

Murry(1992) argued that "process-oriented approach refers to a teaching process that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. This teaching approach concludes with editing as a final stage in text creation, rather than an initial one as in the product oriented approach. The process-oriented approach may include identified stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and re-writing. Once the rough draft has been created, it is polished into sub-sequent drafts with the assistance of peer of teacher conferencing. Final editing and publication can follow if the author chooses to publish their writing"(P.16).

Studies shed light on definite number of stages within this approach. The main five important ones were detected by scholars.

-prewriting: the writer will find many ways to gather information using different activities including: drawing, talking, thinking, reading, listening to records, interviews and conducting library research.

-Drafting: the writer starts expressing and developing her/his draft paper even if they were false i.e. she/he will write freely using creativity and imagination without caring about grammar, punctuation and spelling, but he/she focuses more on the content.

-Revision: in this stage the writer will make the necessary changes of the work by additions and deletions and also correcting errors.

-Editing: The writer will edit the work by giving attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation.

-Publishing: it refers to the delivery of the work to the audience or the teacher.

In order to deliver a good and a correct piece of writing, the learner has to go through the previously mentioned stages. In this approach the learner is supposed to come up with his proper ideas without relying on the teachers' feedback.

### 1.4.3 The Genre Oriented Approach

As implied by the name, this method focuses on teaching specific genres that students need to master in order to function effectively in a variety of settings. This could include a serious concern about the written products' substance as well as the environment that they were created in. It has a functional entity in its theoretical foundation. The latter indicates that language, which has the capacity to serve a variety of purposes, is used to accomplish many objectives. Also, this trend sees language as a sociocultural phenomenon that cannot be separated from its environment. As a result, certain genres are thought to fulfill particular social aims. The main goal of employing the genre method to train L2 writers is to raise students' familiarization with the appropriate use of various registers that serve discrepant goals.

The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning has defined the genre approach as "a framework for language instruction" (Byram, 2004) "It is based on examples of a particular genre. By framework is meant guiding students. The genre framework supports students' writing with guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages."(234).

Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics stated that it is "an approach to the teaching of writing, particularly L1 writing, which bases a writing curriculum on the different types of text structures or genres children encounter in school

and which are crucial to school success. Genre based approaches are particularly strong in Australia as a result of the workof functional linguists such as Halliday and Martin. Examples of genres encountered in school work are Observation and Comment, Recount, narrative and report. A report, for example, has the structure of a general classificatory statement, a description, and a final comment. Proponents of the genre approach argue that control over specific types of writing are necessary for full participation in social processes. In adult, second language teaching a genre-based approach starts from recognition of the discourse community in which the learners will be functioning, e.g. a hotel, factory or hospital. Discourses from the target speech community are studied in terms of the text types and text roles that characterize them."

Hammond (2002) identifies three important steps to writing persuasively and improved gender strategy:

1. The first step is modeling, in which the target category is presented to students to build on. Discussion in this step focuses on the educational and social aspects of gender.

2-When students complete the exercises and attempt to manipulate linguistic forms, they are in the second stage of the textual negotiation process.

3. Independent building which includes a final stage in which students actually create text through exercises such as topic selection, write and do research.

### 1.4.4 The Free Writing Approach

The free writing approach is based on the idea that when students write freely they will improve their ability in the language skill that they are practicing on without the teacher's interference .In this way students are going to develop their competence. This approach focuses on content and fluency at the same time. Later on the teacher provides feedback on their pieces of writing.

Peyton and Staton (1996) stated that "learners write for a period of time in class on a topic which is interested to them. This writing can take many forms, including quick writing which are time- limited, done individually, and not always shared; and dialogue journals, written to a teacher, a classmate or other partner who then responds". On the other hand such writings "may be kept in the notebook. From these pieces, themes may emerge that

can act as a facilitator for more extensive writing that is discussed , revised, edited, and published" (p.16_32).

According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2010) "Is a pre-writing activity in which students write as much as possible about a topic within a given time period without stopping. The goal is to produce as much writing as possible without worrying about grammar or accuracy, in order to develop fluency in writing and to produce ideas which might be used in a subsequent writing task"(p.231).

The Free writing Approach permits students to recognize that they are writing without the audiences' pressure and without giving attention to grammar and spelling mistakes.

### 1.4.5 The Controlled to Free Approach

This approach emerged in contrast to the Free-Writing Approach in which the students produce pieces of writing taking into consideration grammar mistakes. Furthermore, teachers give instructions to students to make some modifications such as grammar and style in their productions. This process leads students to write without committing mistakes since they are already controlled, then they will write freely using their own ideas. In addition, the Controlled-to-Free Approach is regarded as an efficient apparatus for teaching writing for English learners. According to Raimes (1983) "this approach stresses three features: grammar, syntax, and mechanics"(p.78).

## 1.5 The target language

Target language, Second language or L2 is the language that students are studying as well as the specific vocabulary that they desire to learn or that their teachers want them to learn. In addition, it is the foreign language in which students learn after their MT.

A TL can be the language that someone who is not a native speaker is trying to learn , or a language that someone who is translating into another language . In the first situation, the non-native speakers' motivations may be learning a majority language in which his or her language is the minority language. A person's original language might be lost or changed to the TL under specific situations. This frequently occurs when a speaker of the TL relocates to a new nation at a young age. In this study English language is the TL.

The English language is extremely important in its role as an international language. According to Shondel (2006) it is now spoken by over 508 billion people, placing it as the

second in terms of speaker population. No one can claim to be a part of this globalization unless he is fluent in two things: English and computing.The importance of English stems from its widespread use rather than from the number of people who speak it because of the global signification of it.

Many countries including Algeria have included it at nearly all levels of the educational system .Teaching English in Algeria brings in the third year primary school and continues until the end of secondary school. And they start applying it even in universities.

### 1.6 The mother tongue

The mother tongue indicates the language acquired during infancy through interaction with the members of communities .Lust (2006) claims that the original meaning has been refined as a result of the numerous modifications in children approaches. According to Skutnabb (2008) a kid learns his mother tongue as his first language. He also notes that this process occurs naturally, rather than through official instruction. In this case our MT is Arabic.

Arabic language has an incredible position in the Algerian society not only for the religious reason, but also for the historical background. It is considered as the first official national language in Algeria.

### 1.7 The Status of English in the Algerian Educational System

According to statistics in 2022, there were around 1.5 billion people worldwide who spoke English either natively or as a second language. It is a language of international communication in business, diplomacy, technology, sports, travels and entertainment (Tiersky&Tiersky 2001.np).

English language is considered as prevalent .It is the pre-dominant language of new media. So, the focus on teaching English is becoming highly recommended, Specifically in Algeria. The approval of the ministry of education recently announced many changes concerning English teaching situation. Later on, Algeria is moving towards teaching English at the primary level after deep researches and studies of specialists. Nowadays, there is an increasing demand for English from students, the faculty, and non-academic staff. Messekher said that many academics and higher education policy makers believe that English is the language of development and strategic choice for higher education.

In early 2019, the ministry of higher education and scientific research decided to accept English as the language of scientific research, and discuss diplomas due to its position of first language in the world for science and knowledge.

### 1.8 Language Transfer

Language transfer has been recognized as an essential element in applied linguistics since many decades. Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied linguistics (1988) defines language transfer as "The effect of one language on the learning of another" (P.322).

### 1.9 Types of Transfer

Skehan (2008) stated that language transfer "is the influence of the mother tongue or other languages which have been learned". Thus, when EFL learners learn English they may find that they are using some of the same words and phrases from their NL.This can happen for a number of reasons, including the fact that English and Arabic are different languages. However, there are two main types of transfer (negative and positive).

#### 1.9.1 Positive Transfer

Positive transfer happens when we can understand what someone is saying without making any mistakes. This happens when learners know the same words and structures in their MT and TL. Troik (2006.p.35) states that positive transfer is also called facilitating, and another scholar as Oldin (1989.p.27) confirms that positive transfer results from similarities and differences between any languages that have been previously acquired the TL.

In positive transfer, the similarities between L1 and L2 help EFL learners to develop their skills more quickly .This is because they can use the similarities between the two languages to lead them to understand more easily. English language and French language have many similarities in which any learner that has his NL which is French it will be easy for him to learn English. For example, the plural morpheme s in both English and French.

### 1.9.2 Negative Transfer

Transfer is said to be negative when previous learning hindrance or disrupt with the learning of subsequent task. Otherwise when the learning of one task makes the learning of the other task harder.

Cortes (2006) defines negative transfer as "The negative transfer that the knowledge of the first language has in the learning of the TL is due to the differences existing between both languages"(P.4).

Negative transfer may happen in two ways; whether conscious or unconscious. First, the conscious way occurs due to the influence of MT when writing in the TL. Second, the unconscious way takes place when the L2 learners cannot recognize the difference between the internal rules of the language and structures.

## 1.10 Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive analysis is a comparative study which identifies the similarities and differences between pair of languages. It was first suggested by Whorf Benjamin and Charles Fries during the 1940s.

Observing students learning a second language inspired the concept of contrastive analysis. Each student or group of students had a tendency to make the same linguistic errors as previous groups. This led to the assumption that the errors were the result of the student's first language interfering with the second .this interference occurred because the students applied rules of their first language to the rules of the second language, much like children apply the rules of regular verbs to irregular once.

Many scholars provided different definitions for CA. Fisiak (1980) stated that CA may be defined roughly as a sub-discipline of linguistics which concerned with the comparison of two or more languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities that hold between them (p.1703).

According to Troike (2006) CA involves prediction and explanation of EFL learners' problems based on comparing the similarities and the differences between the MT and TL (p.34).

By learning both languages, teachers can better understand the basic structure of each language. This will help them better to predict errors or difficulties that students may experience.

Particularly, it puts much important on investigating the learners' error, in which the first language and second language systematically compared.

### 1.11 Error Analysis

Some scholars found that CA was unable to extract all errors. Therefore, there was a need for another approach which is error analysis. It was first suggested by Stephen Pet Corder in the 1960s.Crystal (2008) resembles that "Error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language". Similarly, Richard et al.(1985) stated that " Error analysis is the study and analysis of errors made by second or foreign language learners"(P.233).

Writing is considered as a complex skill in the first language, undoubtedly it is also complicated for a learner to write in a foreign language. Consequently, many errors are committed in their piece of writing. Moreover, EA is considered as an efficient approach to recognize errors and their origins and the difficulties in learning a second language.

Corder defined EA as a linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors of learners and to make comparisons between these errors and the TL errors.

Error Analysis is regarded as an important source of information to teachers in which it provides data on students' errors. Moreover, it improves the effectiveness of teaching .In addition to that it helps teacher to correct students' errors.

#### 1.11.1 Types of Errors

Language learning like any kind of human learning involves committing errors. Researchers in the field of Applied linguistics usually distinguish between two main types of errors:

#### 1.11.2 Intralingual

These errors are brought on by the TL itself. In addition to using L1 transfer, students who are unfamiliar with TL form regardless of their level or class. Students have two options

either they can study the necessary material utilizing their learning techniques or attempting to fill the gap through using communication strategies to bridge the divide.

Intralingual errors are within the TL itself. According to Richards " Intralingual errors are those which reflects the general characteristics of role learning , such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules , and failure to learn conditions under which rules applied". Furthermore, a large number of errors were found to be committed by EFL learners regardless to their NL.

It includes: overgeneralization, simplification, induced errors and fossilization.

a) Overgeneralization: is to extend the application of rules on all aspects of language without the necessary exceptions. It creates incorrect form of unconsciously. Example:

-mobiles-tables-pens-errors….√

-mans-womans-mouses-foots…X

b) Simplification:the way in which learners simplify or leave out some elements .Example: I studied English for two year.

c)Induced Errors: this term was first used by Stenson(1983) to refers to learner errors that results more from the classroom situation than from either the students incomplete competence in English grammar or first language interference (P.189).Example:

She cried as if a baby.

She cried like a baby.

d)Fossilization: it is a process in which a mistake becomes a habit.

### 1.11.3 Interlingual

Interference, language transfer, or cross linguistics are terms used to refer to interlingual errors.

Interlingual errors are those that can be attributed to the NL.According to Stanley and Matthew interlingual is also labeled as transfer from the first language into the second language. Corder(1981) stated that these kind of errors occur when the learners habit

(patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him or her , to some extent , from from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language

Lado (1964) said that interference is negative influence of the MT (L1) on the performance of the TL(L2) .Chelli (2013) also defined interlingual errors are the result of language transfer , which is caused by learners' first language.

### 1.12 The Influence of the Mother Tongue in English

Many EFL learners face challenging difficulties in acquiring different skills specifically in non-native language because of the huge differences between Arabic and English .According to Salih and Ridha "EFL learners commit errors because they think in their native language and that they translate their thoughts into L2 or foreign language"(P.24).

Writing is considered as a difficult skill to master especially in a foreign language that necessitates cognitive analysis as well as linguistic synthesis. Many studies point out that EFL students interfere from their first language during the writing process in English. Friedlander (1997) claims that "writers do any of their work in their first language".

Furthermore, studies have shown that L1 interference in L2 production skills is considered as a main reason behind having difficulties for L2 learners. According to Friedlander (1997) stated that "writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second or third language".

## Conclusion

Mastering the skill of writing is often considered the most challenging and complex task for learners. It requires a combination of knowledge, information, attention, and practice to facilitate the writing process. Additionally, learners encounter significant difficulties that result in errors. Researchers and specialists in the field have identified that these errors can be attributed to Mother Tongue interference.

Throughout this chapter, we have provided clear definitions for writing, the Target Language, and the Mother Tongue. We have emphasized the importance of writing and its defining characteristics. Furthermore, we have summarized the five main approaches to teaching writing. Additionally, we have examined the status of English in the Algerian educational system. We have also delved into the concept of language transfer, categorizing its major types. Moreover, we have introduced and defined the two main theories: contrastive analysis and error analysis. We have identified the primary reasons behind the errors made by EFL learners, namely intralingual and interlingual factors. The chapter concludes by highlighting the influence of the Mother Tongue on English classes.

In the next chapter, we will discuss the research methodology and design, providing a framework for further exploration of the topic.

# CHAPTER 2

# Research Methodology and Design

## Introduction

The previous chapter explored the fundamental concepts of L1 interference, shedding light on key definitions such as writing skill, mother tongue, and the target language. It emphasized the significance of writing skill and its essential characteristics. The chapter concluded by examining the impact of the mother tongue on English classes.

In the next phase of the research, we will delve into the practical aspect to ensure the credibility of our study. To achieve this, we have chosen a mixed methods approach to gather data. This chapter aims to provide a brief overview of the methodology, encompassing quantitative research, qualitative research, and the mixed methods approach. We will also discuss the research instruments employed, the population and sampling considerations for our case study, and the tools that facilitated the research process.

To collect data, we utilized questionnaires that were administered to both teachers and third-year high school students. These questionnaires served as valuable tools for obtaining insights and perspectives on the impact of the mother tongue on English writing skills. Additionally, a written test was provided to the learners, requiring them to write short paragraphs. This test was instrumental in further enhancing the credibility of our research.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, we will provide a detailed description of the students' questionnaire, including its design, administration, and the specific areas of inquiry covered. This will be followed by an explanation of the teachers' questionnaire, outlining its structure and the specific questions asked.

By employing a mixed methods approach and utilizing a combination of research instruments, we aim to gather comprehensive and diverse data that will enable us to explore the research topic in-depth. The insights derived from this study will contribute to a better understanding of the impact of the mother tongue on students' writing skills in English.

Moving forward, the subsequent chapters will focus on the analysis of the collected data, presenting the findings and their implications. This will allow us to draw meaningful conclusions, offer recommendations, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of language acquisition and education.

## 2.1 Methodology

The present research is conducted as a case study involving a total of 48 students and four (4) secondary school teachers of English language in third-year classes at Si M'hamed Bouguerra Beni-Slimane Medea. This deliberate selection of participants is driven by the primary objective of comprehending the phenomenon of mother tongue (MT) impact on English classes and determining its influence on students' written production.

To effectively address the research problem and answer the research questions, a mixed methods approach was employed. The quantitative method was employed through the use of questionnaires administered to both teachers and students. This method allowed for the collection of numerical data to gain insights into participants' perceptions and experiences. On the other hand, the qualitative method was utilized to analyze students' written paragraphs and responses, enabling a deeper understanding of their writing abilities and the potential impact of the MT.

The choice of adopting a mixed methods approach was driven by the nature of the research topic, which necessitates both description and analysis of the case study. By employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the MT's impact on English classes, allowing for a richer understanding of the phenomenon.

The utilization of a mixed methods approach enhances the validity and reliability of the research findings by triangulating data from multiple sources. This approach enables a more holistic exploration of the research topic, providing valuable insights into the complexities and nuances of the relationship between the MT and English writing skills.

Moving forward, the subsequent chapter will delve into the analysis of the collected data, offering a detailed examination of the quantitative findings obtained from the questionnaires and the qualitative insights derived from the analysis of students' written work. This comprehensive analysis will contribute to a more thorough understanding of the research topic, informing recommendations and implications for both language instruction and curriculum development.

### 2.1.1The Quantitative Method

The quantitative method is a research approach that draws upon the principles of natural sciences to produce numerical data and hard facts, allowing for a wide range of statistical analyses. Its main objective is to establish cause-and-effect relationships between variables by utilizing mathematical, computational, and statistical methods. This type of research, also known as empirical research, emphasizes accurate and precise measurements. The data collected by researchers can be categorized, ranked, or measured using units of measurement. Through quantitative research, researchers can construct graphs and tables using raw data, facilitating the analysis of results.

### 2.1.2 The Qualitative Method

Qualitative research is a naturalistic technique that seeks to gain a deep understanding of social phenomena within their natural context. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and places emphasis on human beings as meaning-making agents in their daily lives, relying less on logical and statistical procedures. Qualitative researchers employ various inquiry methods to explore complex phenomena that are not easily elucidated through quantitative research alone. While it generates ideas or hypotheses for later quantitative research, its primary goal is to provide insights and understanding of the research problem. Qualitative research delves into the intricacies of human behavior, experiences, attitudes, intentions, and motivations through observation and interpretation, aiming to uncover how people think and feel. Case studies, grounded theory, ethnography, historical analysis, and phenomenology are common types of qualitative research.

### 2.1.3 The Mixed Method

The mixed methods approach combines both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to address research questions comprehensively. By incorporating elements from both approaches, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. The mixed methods approach enables researchers to analyze and interpret the results of both qualitative and quantitative studies, allowing for a more nuanced and comprehensive

exploration of the research question. This approach acknowledges the value of diverse data sources and methodologies, providing a more holistic perspective on the research topic.

## 2.2 Research Instruments

A research instrument serves as a tool for gathering, measuring, and analyzing data relevant to the research interests. These techniques are commonly used to assess various individuals such as patients, clients, students, teachers, and educational settings. Researchers typically choose a research instrument that aligns with their study approach. It is highly recommended to gather information from multiple sources and to obtain the perspectives of both teachers and students regarding the impact of the mother tongue on English writing. Their insights are crucial for enhancing the learning and teaching of writing among English students. To collect data in this study, two research tools were utilized: a questionnaire administered to both students and teachers, which served as a suitable instrument for testing the hypotheses. Additionally, third-year students were asked to write short paragraphs, providing valuable insights into the influence of the mother tongue on their writing. This served as a supplementary instrument for gathering further information.

## 2.3 Population and Sampling

The population of the research refers to the group of individuals that researchers aim to generalize their findings to. It encompasses the total number of units (individuals, organizations, events, objects, or items) from which samples are selected for measurement. Sampling, on the other hand, involves selecting a representative group of people, objects, or items from the larger population for measurement purposes. The sample should accurately represent the population to ensure the generalizability of research findings (Jophnes, 1995; Salant & Dilman, 1994)

In this study, to gather necessary information regarding the writing skills of third-year secondary school students, a sample group of 48 students was selected during the academic year 2022/2023. This grade was chosen due to the students' upcoming final exams, which provided an opportunity to assess their level of preparedness and identify areas for

improvement in writing. Additionally, the study involved the participation of four English language teachers from secondary schools who willingly collaborated in the research process.

## 2.4 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire administrated to students consists of fourteen (14) questions in addition to a written paragraph. There are seven closed-questions and seven open-questions.

The first and the second questions are about personal information of the students including their age and gender. Concerning the third question is about whether the students like studying English or not.

The fourth and the fifth are dealing with the students' level at English language in general and at their writing production at particular to recognize the source of their level. The fifth question is concerned with students opinion about their English production, while the sixth question is about student's point of view of the written expression session.

The seventh question includes times of practicing writing. Furthermore, the last seven questions deal with the effect of the mother tongue on English writing, in which the eighth question is about the use of Arabic language in the classroom. Moreover, the students were asked whether the use of the MT helps more in understanding. Whereas in the tenth and eleventh questions students are required to answer whether they think in Arabic language while writing in English or translate their ideas from Arabic to English.

Since the students in most of the time are facing difficulties in understanding some words, we asked them what do they do in this case and we suggested three choices (see appendix2).

The question number thirteen indicates whether the students' NL "Arabic" helps them in writing. The last question gives students the opportunity to illustrate the difficulties they face when they are writing in English.

We concluded the questionnaire by asking students to write well-structured short paragraphs about a given topic to test their writing abilities which will help in the analysis in the third chapter.

## 2.5 Administration of Students' Questionnaire

The case study took place in four (4) classes with different branches of third year secondary school in which we asked them to cooperate with us by answering the questions set on the papers .we started by sharing the purpose of our study, after that we read all the questions with explanation in order to have perfect answers and clear opinions to easily collect the data needed. Furthermore, to reduce students' stress we assured that their answers will be neither graded nor considered as correct or false, in addition to that their papers will be anonymous. Finally, our questionnaire was submitted under great circumstances.

## 2.6 Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire consists of fourteen (14) questions (see appendix 1) that were shared with teachers to ensure the reliability of our study and to confirm whether the use of the mother tongue in the classroom has an impact on students' writing skills. Some questions require simple yes-or-no answers, while others require justifications and suggestions. The answers provided by the teachers serve as an additional source of data collection.

The first two questions aim to gather information about the teachers' qualifications and teaching experience, allowing us to assess their capacities. To understand the frequency of students' writing practice, we included the following question: "How many times do you teach written expression in a week?"

The subsequent three questions (fourth, fifth, and sixth) require yes-or-no answers. In the fourth question, we inquire whether the teachers encourage their students to practice writing, aiming to determine if they emphasize the importance of enhancing writing skills. The fifth and sixth questions pertain to the usage of the mother tongue in the classroom.

Since students often make mistakes in their written work, the seventh question focuses on how teachers prioritize correction. We ask: "When you are correcting your students' paragraphs, do you focus more on the context, structure, or both?"

The eighth question is a closed-ended question designed to determine if students face difficulties when writing in English. To gain insight into the teachers' perspective on the reasons behind student errors, we provide five (5) suggestions and ask them to provide additional causes.

In Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Design, we aim to identify the most common difficulties faced by non-native students in writing. Hence, the tenth question asks teachers to select from options such as "lack of background knowledge about the topic," "lack of motivation to write," and "influence of L1 in writing in English."

To gather information specifically about our case study involving third-year students, we ask the question, "Do third-year students commit many errors when writing?"

If teachers answer "yes" to the twelfth question, they are prompted to categorize the most frequent types of errors made by students.

The question "According to your experience, does the interference of students' mother tongue affect the development of their writing skills?" aims to gain further insight into the impact of the mother tongue on writing skill development.

Lastly, the questionnaire concludes with an open-ended question that asks teachers to provide their suggestions for solutions and strategies to mitigate the interference of the mother tongue when writing in the second language.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have delved into the research methodology and design employed to investigate the impact of mother tongue usage in English classes on students' writing skills. To ensure the credibility and reliability of our study, we employed various research instruments.

First and foremost, we designed a comprehensive questionnaire that was administered to a substantial number of participants, including both teachers and third-year high school students. This questionnaire aimed to gather valuable insights and perspectives on the influence of the mother tongue on students' writing abilities. By gathering data from multiple stakeholders, we aimed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Additionally, we implemented a written test for the students. This test served as an essential component in adding further credibility to our research. By assessing the students' writing skills through a practical examination, we were able to directly evaluate their abilities and explore any potential impact of the mother tongue on their written production.

As we conclude this chapter, the next step in our research journey will be to analyze the results obtained from the research instruments. Through a detailed examination of the collected data, we will uncover meaningful patterns, correlations, and insights. This analysis will provide us with a deeper understanding of the relationship between the usage of the mother tongue in English classes and students' writing proficiency.

The forthcoming chapter will present the findings derived from the analysis, shedding light on the implications and significance of our research. By exploring the results in depth, we aim to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field and provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers involved in the teaching and learning of English as a second language.

In sum, this chapter has laid the foundation for our research study, establishing the methodology and design employed to investigate the impact of the mother tongue on students' writing skills. Through the utilization of various research instruments, we have gathered data from teachers and students, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the

research topic. With the analysis of the results on the horizon, we are poised to uncover valuable insights that will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this domain.

# Chapter Three

# Discussion And Interpretation of the Results, Limitations , Suggestions and Recommendations

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of mother tongue usage in English classes on students' writing skills. Specifically, the study focuses on investigating the common errors made by third-year high school students. To accomplish this, the current chapter will involve the identification and analysis of both student and teacher questionnaires, as well as an analysis of students' written paragraphs. The main objective of this study is to validate the hypothesis that the use of the mother tongue has an effect on the writing skills of second language (L2) students.

Furthermore, this chapter will present the analysis, findings, and results derived from the research. Additionally, the limitations of the study will be identified and discussed. To conclude this chapter, practical suggestions will be provided for both teachers and students to overcome the issue of mother tongue interference in English classes.

By conducting this research and exploring the impact of mother tongue usage on students' writing skills, it is anticipated that valuable insights will be gained to improve the teaching and learning process in English classrooms.

### 3.1 The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

The first two questions indicate the gender and the age of the students. It is noticed that the majority of the participants are females. They are 28 which represent 56% from the whole population whereas 20 males represent 42% in this study.

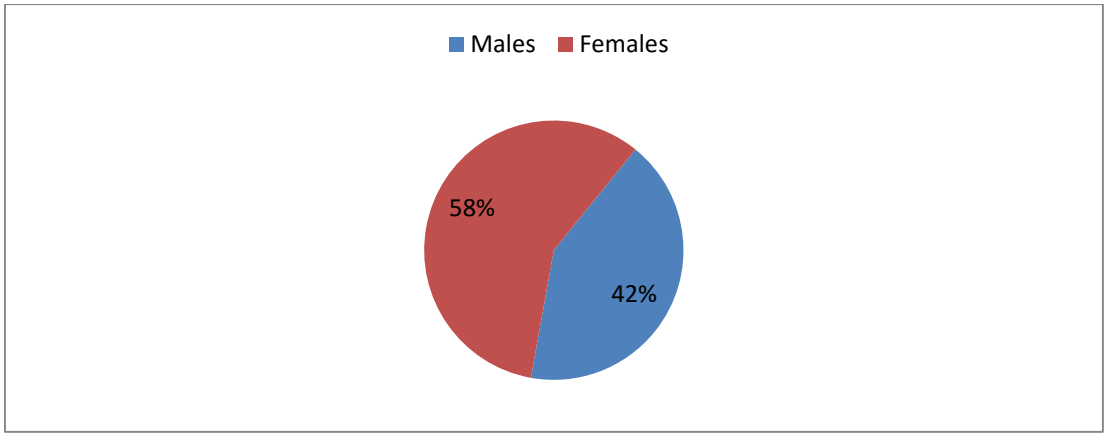



**Figure 01:** The students' gender.

It is found that, the informants are aged between 17 and 19 years. In addition, 75% of the learners' like studying English because according to their opinion English is easy, a universal language, and it is a useful language to communicate with foreigners. Whereas, the rest 25% of the students do not like studying it due to the lack of vocabulary, and they see that it is difficult to comprehend.

The question four (04) deals with the learners' level, according to the results mentioned in the table below, it can be noticed that 21% of the participants believe that they have a good level in English. While 50% of them think that they have an average level, in contrast 29% of the students have a low level in English.

| Responses | Good | Average | Low |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage % | 21 | 50 | 29 |

**Table 01:** Learners' Level.

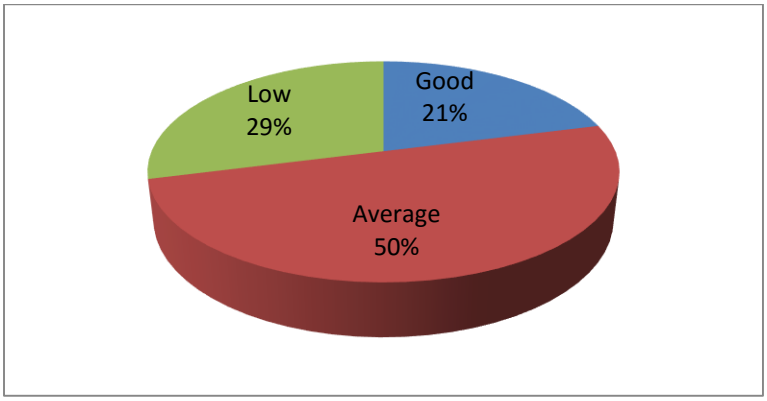



**Figure 02:** Learners' Level.

In question five (05) we investigated with the students to know how they see their production level. It is observed that most of them 42% think that their English production is average.23% of the students argued that they have a good level in writing. Moreover, 35% of the participants mentioned that their level is low.

| Responses | Good | Average | Low |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 23 | 42 | 35 |

**Table 02:** Students' opinions about their English production.

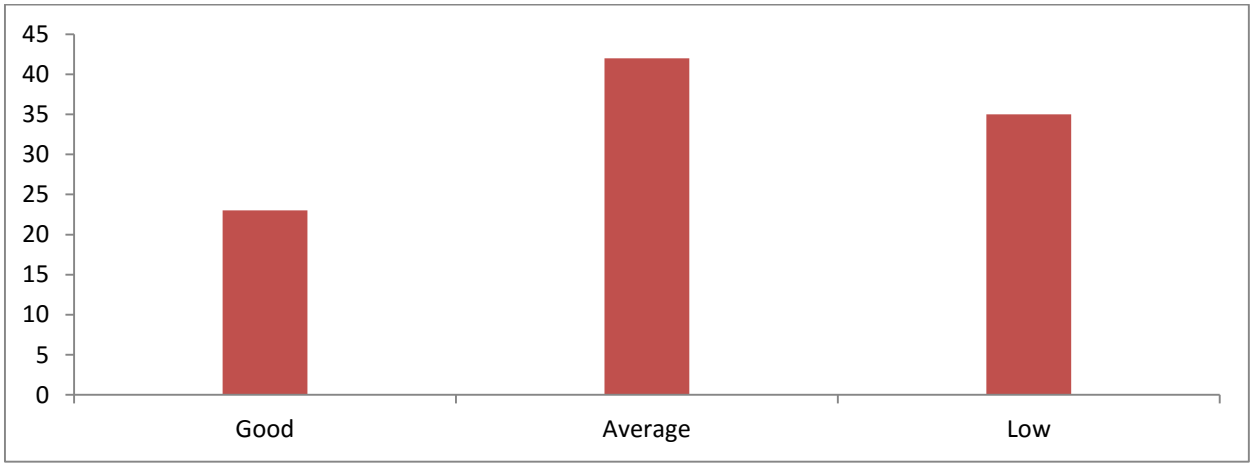



**Figure03**: Students' opinions about their English production.

The following table shows that 67% of the students find that the written expression session is interesting, which mean that they are motivated and aware of the importance of writing skill. While, 33% of them do not find it interesting.

| Option | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 67 | 33 |

**Table 03**: Students awareness of written expression session.

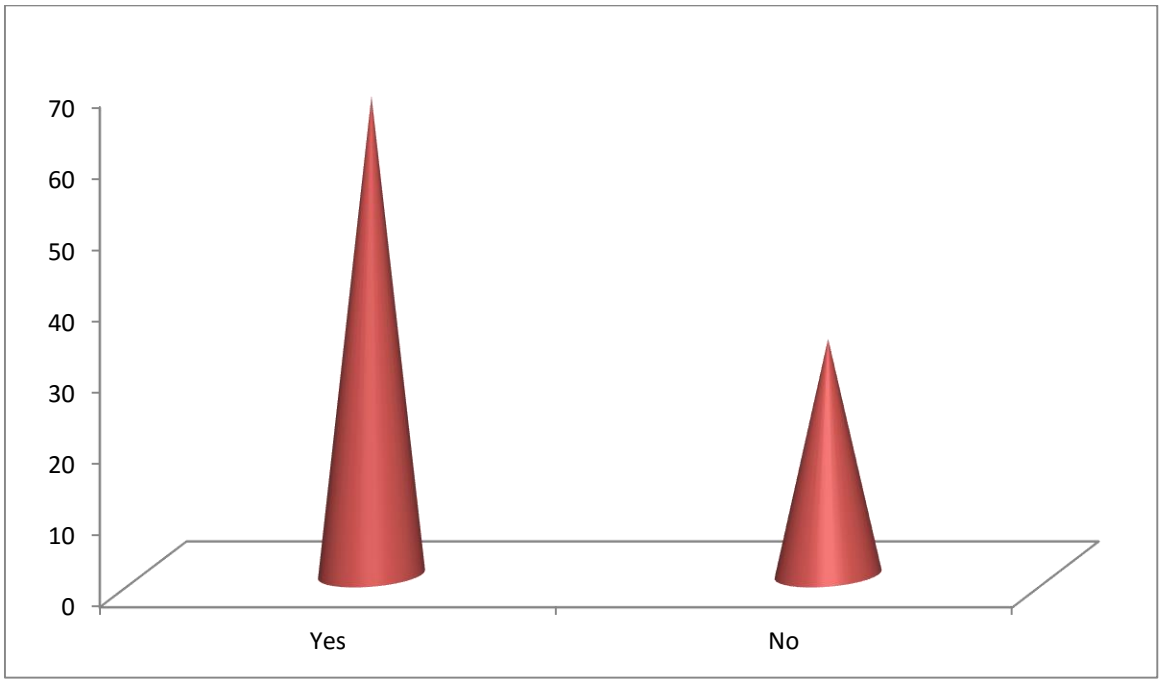



**Figure 04**: Students' awareness of written expression session.

In order to know whether third year students practice English at home or not we asked the seventh question, it is pointed out that 50% of them answered by no , and 44% answered by yes as shown in the following table :

| Responses | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage % | 44 | 56 |

**Table04:** Writing Frequency

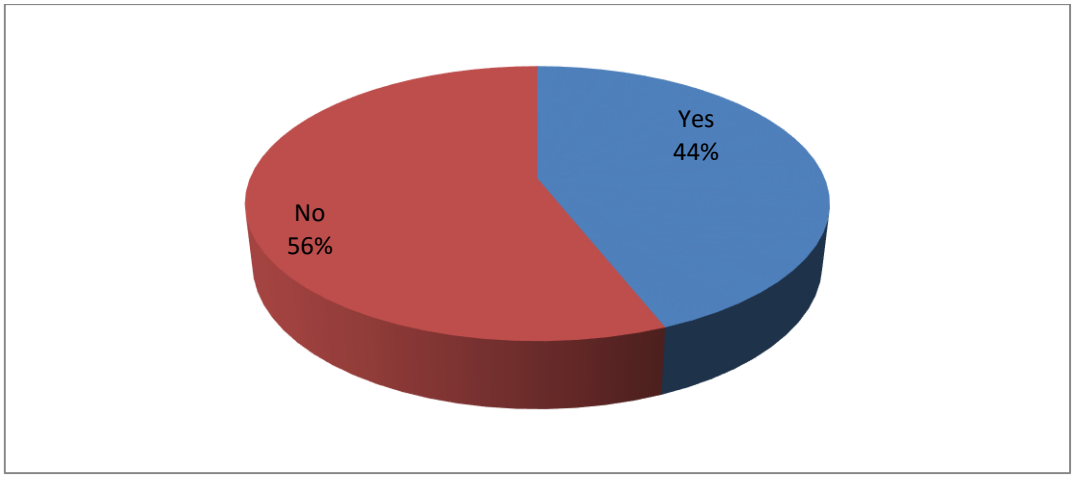



**Figure05**: Writing frequency.

The answers of the eighth question declared that half of the participants are not allowed by their teachers to use Arabic in the classroom, while to others are permitted by the teachers to use the MT in the classroom.

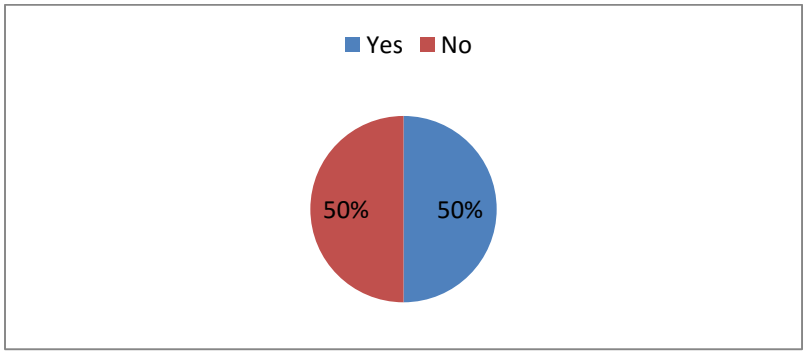



**Figure06:** Teachers' permission about the use of the MT in the classroom.

### The help of the L1 in the understanding of L2

The results of the question number nine shows that the majority of the students (88%) perfectly understand when their English teachers use the MT ( Arabic language).

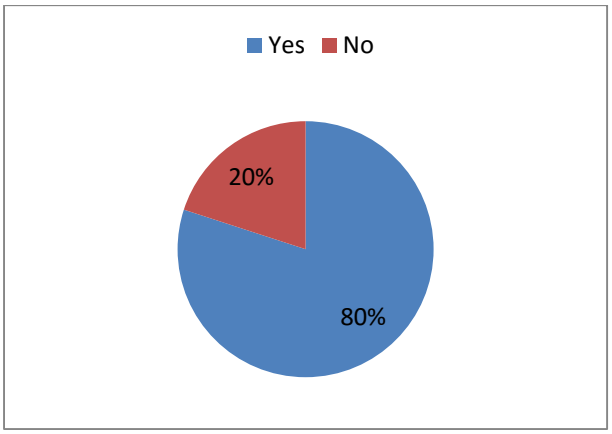



**Figure 07:** The help of the L1 in the understanding of L2

**Think in in Arabic to write English production**

The responses indicate that 60% of the students think in Arabic when writing in English because for learners the use of the MT helps them to express their ideas easily. While, 40% declared that they think in English because they believe that they have the ability to express their ideas and thoughts without referring to their MT.

| Option | Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 60 | 40 |

**Table05:** Thinking in Arabic to write English production.

**Notions Translation**

The figure number 05 shows that 77% of the informants translate their ideas or thoughts from Arabic to English during writing because they are incapable to express their ideas directly, so they think that translation is the suitable way that helps them to write. Whereas, the other students (23%) declared that they think in English when they write.

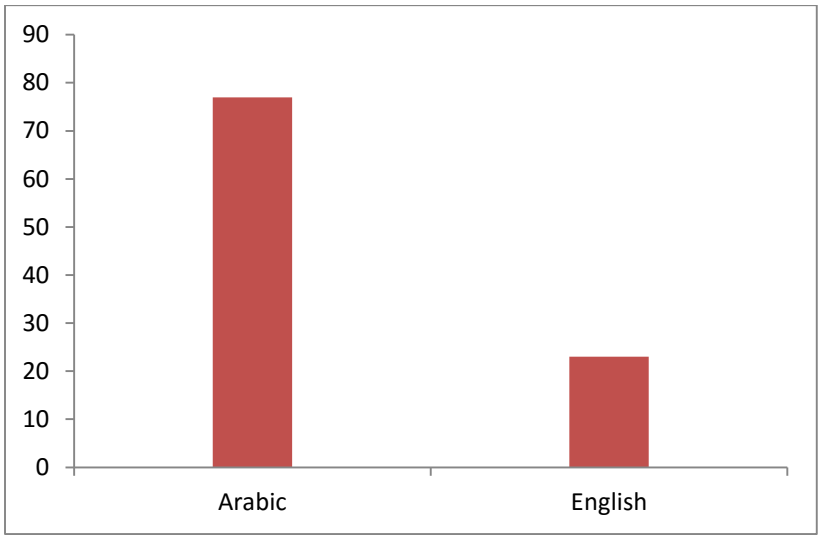



**Figure08:** Notions translation.

**Students' choices when they do not understand an English word**

The answers reveal that the majority of the participants (42%) prefer to ask the teacher for translation when they do not understand a word without doing any efforts.40% of the students prefer to use their personal dictionary. The rest of them (48%) just skip the word.

| Options | Percentage % |
|---|---|
| I ask the teacher for translation. | 42 |
| I use my personal dictionary. | 40 |
| I just skip the word | 18 |

**Table 06:** Students' choices when they do not understand an English word.

### Students' Opinion about the MT Help during Writing

In question fourteen (14) the majority of the students (58%) claim that the Arabic language usage help them when they are writing because they have the background language in Arabic. While 15% of them said no because it does not help them when they are writing.

| Option | yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage % | 85 | 15 |

**Table 07:** Students' opinion about the MT help during writing.

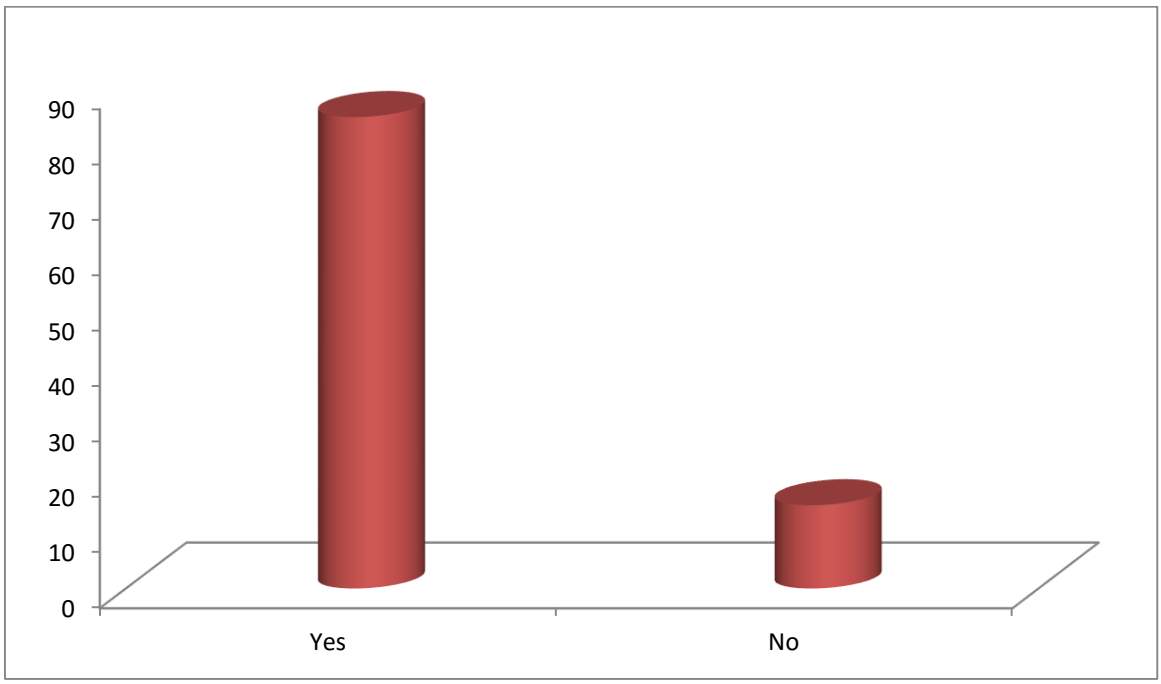



**Figure 09:** Students' opinion about the MT help during writing.

### The Difficulties That Students Face While Writing

In the last question, we gave students the opportunity to tell us about the difficulties that they face when they are writing. The results show that the majority of the students face difficulties when writing because of the lack of vocabulary, and the minority of them commits mistakes in grammar. In addition to other obstacles such as spelling mistakes and difficulties in understanding.

## 3.2 Results of Students Questionnaire

According to the analysis of students' questionnaire, the results collected indicate that the majority of the participants composed of females. The population of the study is aged between 17 and 19 years old. It is highly observed that most of them like studying English due to several reasons. Moreover, 50% of the students have an average level in English. We observed that approximately half of them have also an average level in English production. Third year students are conscious of the importance of the written expression session in which 67% of the students answered by YES when we asked them whether they find it interesting or not. Moreover, the practice of writing among students is ignored; meaning that the majority of them face difficulties when writing in English.

From the analysis of the question eight (08) we point out that half of the participants are not permitted to use the MT in the classroom, and the majority of them declared that the MT usage by the teachers helps them in better understanding. It is shown that 60% of the students think in Arabic during writing to reduce the complexity. However, students rely on translation when they do not understand an English word. Hence, the majority of third year students believe that the Arabic language usage help them while writing. Finally, the analysis of the last question leads us to know the difficulties that students find when they are writing in English.

## 3.3 The Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

### 1-Teachers Profile

Teachers who cooperated in the case study were four (04) teachers, and they all have BA (Bachelor / Licence) degree in teaching English. Those teachers have been experienced teaching English language from 15 to 30 years as it is shown in the second question which aims to recognize that teachers' experience is important in the analysis of the questionnaire.

### 2-How Many Times Do Teachers Teach Written Expression A Week?

Three of the teachers declared that they teach written expression once a week and one of them teach it once or twice in month. Since, writing is more practical and theoretical; it is not enough to teach it once or twice a week.

### 3-Encouragement and Motivation

We investigated whether teachers encourage and motivate their students to practice writing, and all of them answered with yes; which means that they are aware about the importance of enhancing the writing skill.

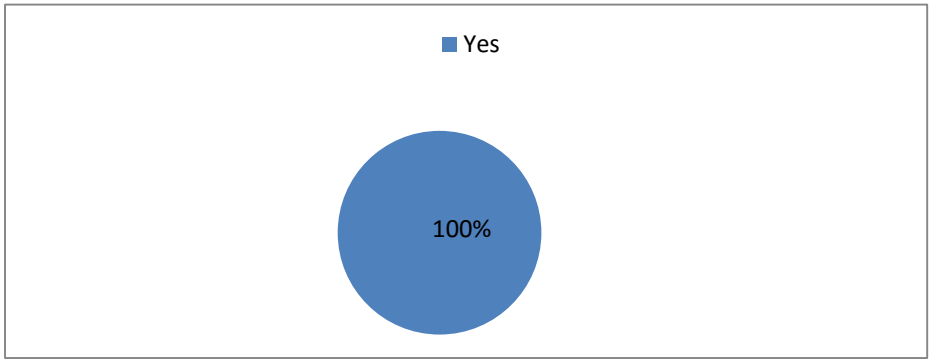



**Figure 10:** Encouragement and motivation.

### 4-Teachers' permission about using Arabic in the classroom

The results in question five (05) have shown that three of the teachers allow their students to use Arabic in the classroom and one of them forbid his students to use the MT in the class:

| Options | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 75 | 25 |

**Table 08:** Teachers' permission about using Arabic in the classroom.

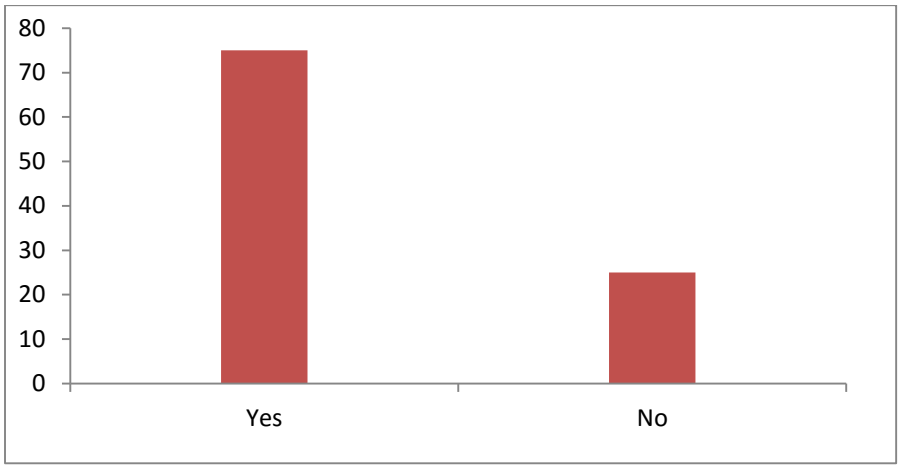



**Figure 11:** Teachers' permission about using Arabic in the classroom.

## 5-The MT Usage in the Classroom

It is found in the sixth (06) question that all the teachers use the MT in the classroom , while one of them use it rarely, two of them sometimes, and the last one uses it always.

| Options | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 100 | 0 |

**Table 09:** The MT usage in the classroom.

## 6-Approaches to Teaching Writing

There are five approaches required in teaching English which are: The prodect approach, the process approach, the genre-oriented approach, the free writing approach, and the controled to free approach.Since the product approach deals with the structure, and the process approach deals with the content we asked the seventh question to teachers to know on what they focus more.The results are shown in the table below:

| Options | Structure | Content | Both |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage % | 0 | 0 | 100 |

**Table 10:** Approaches to teaching writing.

**7-Students' Difficulties While Writing**

All of the teachers assumed that their students find difficulties during writing in English. This fact serves the objective of the research:

| Options | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 100 | 0 |

**Table 11:** Students' difficulties while writing.

**8-Students' Writing Problems**

The gained results show that poor content and ideas, poor vocabulary , grammar mistakes, and interference of the MT are the most common writing problems they have observed in their students' writing , which have a great effect on students improvements of writing. These difficulties should be taken into consideration from both teachers and students.

A-Poor content and ideas. B-Poor vocabulary.

C-Grammar mistakes. D-Interference of the MT.

| Option | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |

**Table 12**: Students' writing problems.

**9-Reasons behind Students' Writing Difficulties**

Results indicated that half of the informants (50%) assume that all the aspects are the reason of writing difficulties. However, 50% believe that the writing difficulties are related to : lack of motivation and influence of L1 (MT) in writing in English.

A-Lack of background knowledge.

B-Lack of motivation.

C-Influence of L1.

| Option | A+B+C | B+C |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 50 | 50 |

**Table 13:** Reasons behind students' writing difficulties.

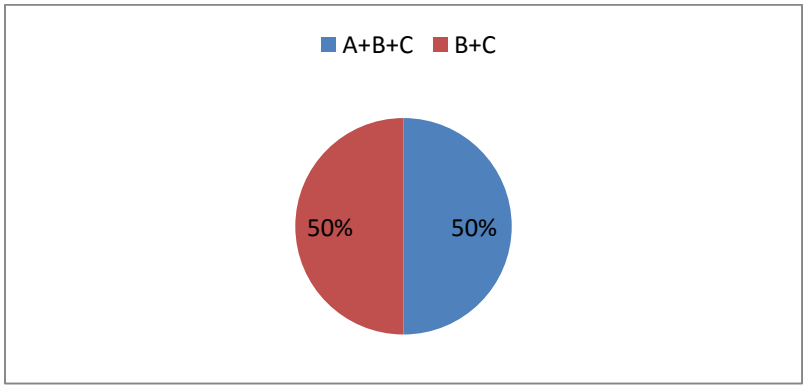



**Figure12:** Reasons behind students' writing difficulties.

### 10-Do Third Year Students Commit Many Errors When Writing?

All the teachers (100%) agree on the fact that students commit many errors when writing in English.

| Options | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 100 | 0 |

**Table 14:** Do third year students commit many errors when writing?

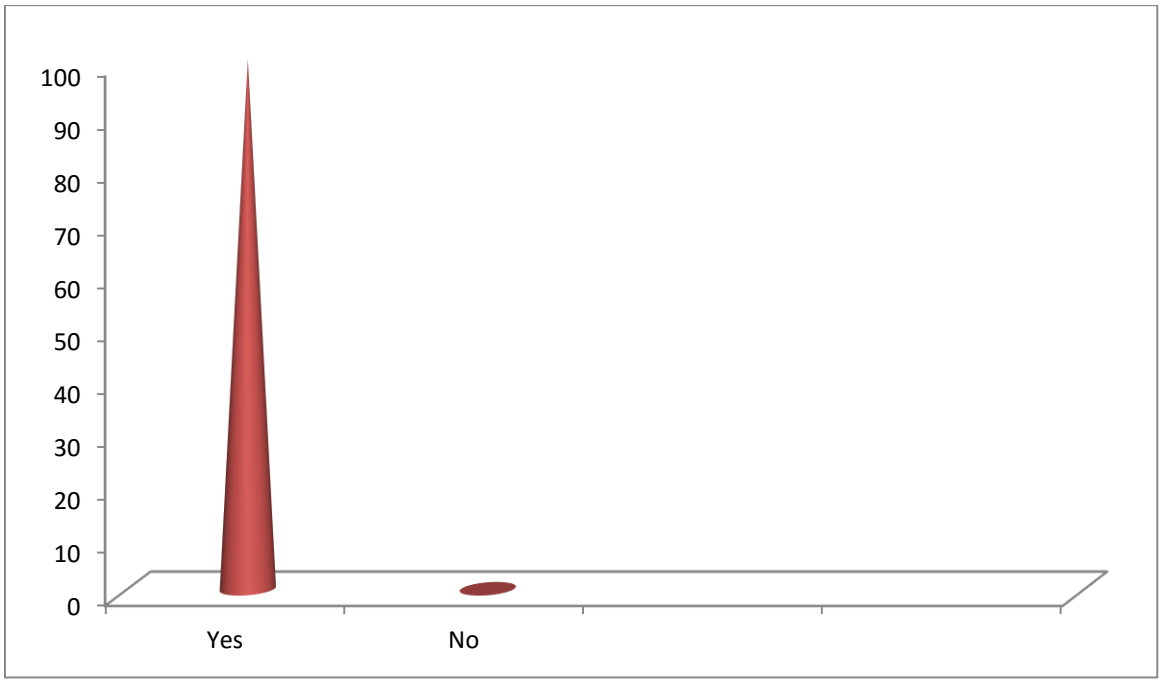



**Figure 13:** Do third year students commit many errors when writing?

**11-Teachers Opinion about the Reasons behind Learners' Errors and Errors Frequency**

It can be observed that (100%) of the teachers agree on the idea that the negative transfer of Arabic language is one of the reasons that lead to those errors.

| Options | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage% | 100 | 0 |

**Table15:** Teachers Opinion about the Reasons behind Learners' Errors and Errors Frequency.

The most frequent errors students make are: Sentence structure, word order, vocabulary and grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, and the use of articles such as "the".

### 12-Teachers Opinions about L1 Interference

All the informants admit the fact that the interference of mother tongue affects the development of the students' writing skill. They justify their opinions with some suggestions, in which they mention that students try to translate their ideas from L1 to L2 without paying attention to the sentence meaning, and the lack of practice due to the lack of motivation.

### 13-Solutions and Strategies

In order to avoid the interference of the mother tongue when writing ; teachers suggest that students should be exposed more to authentic reading texts and samples paragraphs in English as a consequence they will enrich their vocabulary stock. Moreover, teachers propose practicing writing every day and do more writing assignment to enhance their writing skill. Another point, students should avoid the interference of the MT and translating ideas from Arabic to English when writing.

## 3.4 Results of Teachers' Questionnaire

From the analysis and interpretation of teachers questionnaire, the gained results indicates that all the teachers encourage and motivate their students to practice writing .Indeed, while teaching the written expression; two approaches are used by all the teachers including the product and the process approaches ( in which they focus more on both structure and content).The collected answers assumed that students find many difficulties when writing in English .These difficulties are in terms of poor content and ideas, poor vocabulary , grammar mistakes, and the interference of the MT .Moreover, teachers declared that the errors made by third year students are due to the negative transfer of MT .Finally, the informants suggest some strategies and solutions in which students should follow to develop their writing skill and to avoid L1 interference.

## 3.5 The Analysis of Students' Errors:

After correcting students' paragraphs, many errors with different types have been extracted. The purpose of this study is to recognize third year high school students' errors, and to identify the difficulties they are facing during writing in English. This section aims at extracting and exploring errors made by students in their short paragraphs. The following table indicates the errors, their types, the correct form, and their origins.

| Types of errors | Incorrect form | Correct form |
|---|---|---|
| Spelling (28.7%) | Youer, I love in , Algerai<br>Ftuer, mush, beacause<br>Wat, word, mahine<br>Solder,shilding,tobic<br>Grait, famouse,tobe<br>Dont,agrancy, to helpe. | Your, I live in, Algeria<br>Future, much, because<br>What, world, machine<br>Soldier ,child ,topic<br>Great, famous, to be<br>Do not, agency, to help. |
| Articles (8.9%) | -Because is good occupation.<br>-I want to be doctor.<br>-In future I want…..<br>-I wanna be architect.<br>-In the future I want to be the teacher….<br>-I want to travel to the UK.<br>-It has a interesting. | -Because it is a good occupation.<br>-I want to be a doctor.<br>-In the future I want….<br>-I want to be an architect.<br>-In the future I want to be teacher…..<br>-I want to travel to UK.<br>-It has an interesting. |
| Grammatical (15.8%) | -She's graduating soon.<br>-I get payed.<br>-I want to been.<br>-I to hope to will be.<br>-He have.<br>-She help me. | -She will graduate soon.<br>-I will get paid.<br>I want to be.<br>-I hope to be.<br>-He has.<br>-She helps me. |
| Word Order (0.9%) | -My own physics teacher. | -Our teacher of physics. |
| Lexical | -Footbaleur.<br>-juge.<br>-Mu own mark. | -Footballer.<br>-Judge.<br>- My own brand. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (15.8%) | -pupel.<br>-Ma mar. | -People.<br>-My mother. |
| Semantic<br>(6.9%) | -Not what but wat I will be.<br>-It's because it's.<br>-I like this job when I was shilding. | -What I want to be.<br>-It is because….<br>-I like this job since my childhood. |
| Syntactic<br>(11.8%) | -My dream is teacher of Arab.<br>-My dad is an engineer himself which inspired me.<br>-I didn't plan to be anything yet.<br>-It's fun teaching kids. | -My dream is to be a teacher of Arabic.<br>-My father who inspired me is an engineer.<br>-I did not decide yet what to be in the future.<br>-It is funny to teach kids. |
| Prepositions<br>(1.9%) | -I think that its really hard.<br>-I have own ideal model in my life. | -I think that it is really hard.<br>-I have my own ideal model in life. |
| Punctuation<br>(8.9%) | -beni sliman.<br>-french.<br>-english.<br>-germany.<br>-canada. | -Beni-Sliman.<br>-French.<br>-English.<br>-Germany.<br>-Canada. |

**Table16:** Students' Errors.

### 3.6 Recognizing Students' Errors

101 errors were extracted from students' written paragraphs. It is found that different errors were committed whether intralingual errors which are caused from language transfer and MT interference , or interlingual errors which result from the incomplete learning of the L2.It is recognized that the most frequent errors among students are spelling mistakes with a percentage of 28.7% , lexical and grammatical errors 15.8%, syntactic 11.8%.It is noticed that articles and punctuation have the same percentage with 8.9% , semantics with 6.9%, preposition with 1.9%, and the last one word order with 0.9%.

As a result, we recognize that third year high school students commit many errors in their writings due to the negative transfer of the NL.

| Errors | Percentage% |
|---|---|
| Spelling | 28.7% |
| Grammar | 15.8% |
| Lexical | 15.8% |
| Syntax | 11.8% |
| Articles | 8.9% |
| Punctuation | 8.9% |
| Semantic | 6.9% |
| Preposition | 1.9% |
| Word order | 0.9% |

**Table17:** Students' Errors.

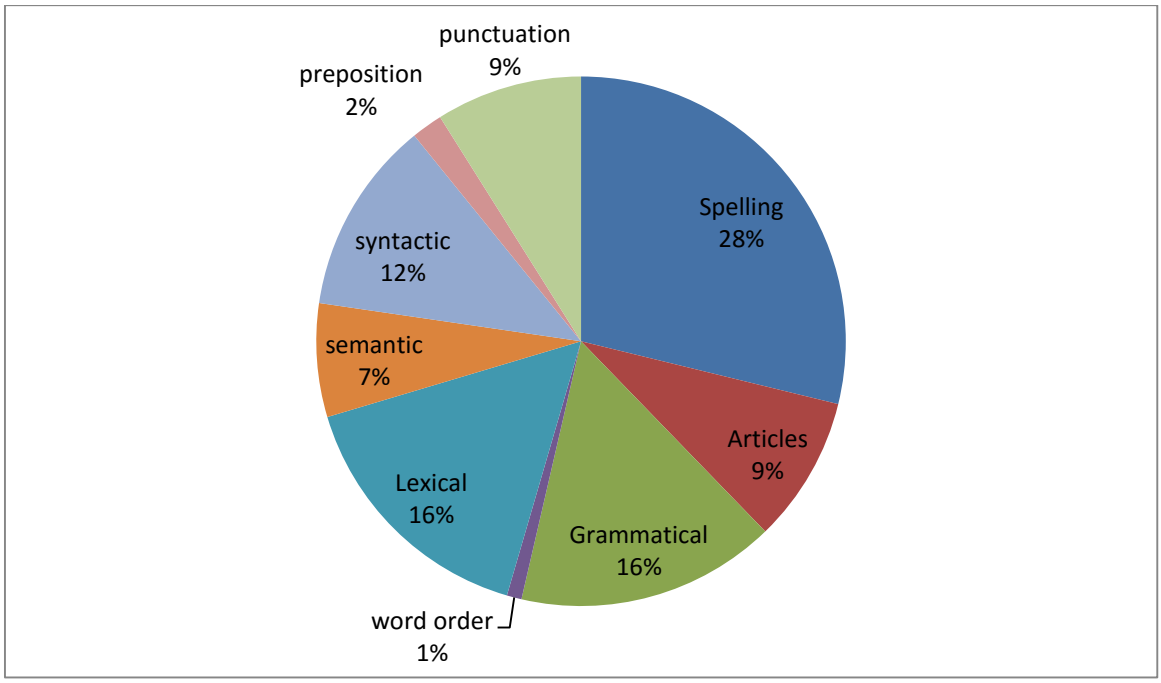



**Figure 14:** Students Errors.

### 3.7 Results of Students' Pieces of Writing

While consulting students written paragraphs, it is noticed that the majority of the writings have serious spelling problems which affect the lucidity of their sentences. Concerning prepositions, it is seen that they have the same function in both Arabic and English. Mostly, students rely on the Arabic equivalence of the English sentence when they do not know which preposition to use. After correcting students' paragraphs, it is found that 09 errors were produced by learners concerning the articles which equal 8.9%.

In some of the students' paragraphs, it is noticed that the following examples were written: "I want to be doctor" and "In the future I want to be the teacher"; the first example equals ( أريد أن أصبح طبيبا) it is written without the use of (ال) so students avoided to use the article (a). While in the second example they added the article (the) in the inappropriate position. In some cases, learners forgot to use articles, and in other cases they used them in the wrong place. Hence, we come to a conclusion that this is a result of the mother tongue interference.

After the analysis of students' errors, it is revealed that 15.8% of errors are committed in grammar. Moreover, due to the incomplete learning of grammar, students face difficulties in applying grammar rules correctly such as ( I want to been ) instead of I want to be , and (he have ) instead of he has.

It is noticed that the most frequent errors are those related to spelling; third year high school students commit errors because some of them write the words as they are pronounced without recognizing the correct word form , in addition to the lack of knowledge of the relationship between sounds and written symbols.

11.8% of errors related to syntax were extracted from students' paragraphs. The reasons behind syntactic errors are due to the transfer of the mother tongue and word orders since the NL word orders' differ from the TL one. For example (I didn't plan to be anything yet), the correct form is I did not decide yet what to be in the future.

As for the semantic errors, it is a result of literal translation for instance (not what but what I will be) instead of what I want to be. Regarding lexical errors, students mostly translate words from Arabic to convey an idea in English.

Finally, it is determined that 09 errors concerning punctuation were found in students writings, including capitalization such as (English and Canada), and the absence of utilizing punctuation which leads to long meaningless sentences.

### 3.8 Findings and Results

The current research tends to investigate the impact of the mother tongue usage in English third year high school classes on students' production. The findings reveal that most of the students commit many errors in different types of them. They occur due to the interference of the mother tongue ( interlingual) , while other errors are intralingual. From the analysis of students' written test, the extracted errors led to poor production.

### 3.9 Limitations of the Study

During conducting our research, a number of limitations faced us due to several reasons. The first obstacle was the lack of primary printed sources like books in the faculty of arts and foreign languages at Yahia Fares University. We faced also another obstacle in which we could not get attached with the high school that the case study took place in.

### 3.10 Suggestions and Recommendation

The main objective of this research is to raise students' awareness of the significance of writing skills and to enhance their ability to develop these skills while minimizing the interference of their mother tongue. To support this objective, the following recommendations are proposed for students to improve their writing proficiency:

1) Regular Writing Practice: Students should engage in regular writing practice to hone their skills. By dedicating time to writing, they can strengthen their command of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.

2) Extensive Reading: Encouraging students to engage in extensive reading can significantly enhance their writing abilities. By exposing themselves to a wide range of texts, students can expand their vocabulary, improve their sentence construction, and develop a better understanding of writing conventions.

3) Utilize Online Writing Applications: Online applications dedicated to writing, such as writing challenges, Learn English Sentence Master, and Writer Lite: Novel/Note/Editor, can be valuable tools for students. These applications provide interactive exercises, prompts, and feedback, allowing students to practice writing in a guided and supportive environment.

4) English Language Immersion: Students should strive to speak only in English during language learning sessions and avoid relying on literal translations. By immersing themselves in the target language, students can develop a more natural and fluent writing style.

5) Audio Books: Listening to audio books in English can serve as an additional resource for students to expand their vocabulary and become more familiar with the language. By exposing themselves to spoken English, students can improve their listening skills, pronunciation, and overall language proficiency, which will positively impact their writing abilities.

6) Grammar and Spelling: Students should have a strong foundation in grammar and spelling basics. Understanding the rules and principles of grammar will help students express themselves more accurately and effectively in their writing. Similarly, paying attention to spelling and practicing spelling exercises will contribute to clearer and more coherent written work.

7) Teacher Guidance: Teachers play a crucial role in the writing process. They should provide guidance, support, and constructive feedback to students, helping them identify areas for improvement and suggesting strategies to enhance their writing skills. By closely monitoring and guiding the writing process, teachers can assist students in overcoming language barriers and achieving better results.

8) Encouragement and Motivation: Teachers should create a supportive and motivating environment that encourages students to write more. By fostering a positive atmosphere, students will feel more confident in expressing their ideas through writing and be more motivated to improve their skills.

By implementing these recommendations, both students and teachers can work collaboratively to overcome the challenges posed by mother tongue interference and cultivate effective writing skills in the English language

## Conclusion

The third chapter of this research was dedicated to testing the hypotheses and addressing the research questions. To achieve this, a questionnaire was administered to both teachers and students, and an analysis of students' written short paragraphs was conducted. These instruments were deemed relevant for the current study.

The analysis of the obtained answers provided confirmation that the various errors made by students can be attributed to the interference of their first language (L1). Furthermore, these errors were categorized into nine distinct types, and the percentage of occurrence for each type was identified and discussed. This comprehensive categorization sheds light on the specific areas where students face challenges in their writing.

In conclusion, the findings and results of the research indicate a clear connection between the usage of the mother tongue and the errors observed in students' writing. The L1 interference has a significant impact on students' ability to effectively express themselves in the target language. This underscores the importance of addressing and minimizing such interference in English classrooms.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research focused specifically on third-year high school students, and the findings may not be generalizable to other age groups or educational levels. Additionally, the study relied on a specific set of instruments (questionnaire and analysis of written paragraphs) that may have limitations in capturing the full range of L1 interference.

To further enhance the understanding of this issue and mitigate the impact of L1 interference, it is recommended that teachers and students actively engage in strategies and activities aimed at promoting target language use in the classroom. Teachers can implement instructional techniques that encourage English immersion and provide targeted feedback to address common errors. Students, on the other hand, should actively practice

writing in the target language and seek opportunities for language practice outside the classroom.

By addressing these limitations and implementing the suggested strategies, both teachers and students can work collaboratively to overcome the challenges posed by L1 interference and improve students' writing skills in the target language.

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

## General Conclusion

The influence of the mother tongue on foreign language learners, particularly in the context of writing, has been a significant focus of this study. Students often rely on their native language background and rules when learning a second language, which can lead to various errors in their writing. Writing is commonly recognized as one of the most challenging skills to master in a second language.

The errors identified in the writing of third-year high school students can be attributed to both interlingual and intralingual factors. Interlingual errors arise from the transfer of ideas and structures from the native language, while intralingual errors stem from incomplete or incorrect knowledge of the target language.

The primary objectives of this study were to investigate the impact of mother tongue usage in English classes on students' writing skills and to identify common mistakes made by third-year high school students. In pursuit of these objectives, three research questions and hypotheses were formulated. Besides, amixed method approach was adopted to collect and analyze data. The researchers gathered data through questionnaires administered to both students and teachers, ensuring that the research was conducted under rigorous conditions to enhance credibility. The analysis of the collected data revealed that mother tongue interference has a detrimental impact on students' writing achievement.

In conclusion, this research paper culminates with a set of suggestions aimed at minimizing mother tongue interference and improving writing skills without relying on the mother tongue. These recommendations serve to empower students and guide them toward effective strategies for enhancing their writing abilities in the target language. By implementing these suggestions, educators and learners can work together to overcome the challenges posed by mother tongue interference and promote successful writing in English.

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# Appendices

**Appendix 01:**

## Teachers' questionnaire

Dear teachers :

We would be very grateful if you take your precious time to help us in our dissertation survey that aims at investigating whether the mother tongue (Arabic) has an influence on English writing production

Would you please fill the attached questionnaire carefully, your responses are very important for the validity of the study. It is appreciated .

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

**1.**What is your degree? ……

**2.**How long have you been teaching English ?.....

**3.**How many times do you teach written expression a week ?.....

**4.**Do you encourage your students to practice writing ?

Yes ☐ ☐

**5.** Do you allow your students to use Arabic in the classroom ?

Yes ☐ ☐

**6.**Do you use the mother tongue in the classroom?

Yes ☐ ☐

**7.**when you are correcting your students' paragraphs , do you focus more on:

a) Content ☐

b) Structure ☐

c) Both ☐

**8.**Do your students find difficulties when writing in English ?

Yes ☐ ☐

**9.**What do you think that the most common writing problems are?

a) Poor content and ideas. ☐

b) Poor vocabulary. ☐

c) Grammar mistakes. ☐

d) Interference of the Mother Tongue. ☐

**10.**What are the reasons behind facing difficulties by students while writing?

a) Lack of the background knowledge ☐

b) Lack of motivation to write ☐

c) Influence of L1( Mother Tongue) in writing in English ☐

**11.** Do third year students commit many errors when writing ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

**12.** Do you think that the negative transfer of Arabic language is one of the reasons that leads to those errors?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes , what are the most frequent errors they make?

……
……

……
……

……
…….

**13.** According to your experience, does the interference of students' mother tongue affect their development of writing skill ? justify why

……
…….

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……

……
……..

**14.**What are the solutions and strategies you suggest to avoid the interference of MT when writing?

……
……
……
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……

**Appendix 02:**

**Students' questionnaire**

Dear students :

we would be grateful if you help us by answering the following questions by ticking (✓) the appropriate box or by a full sentence if it is necessary .

Thank you.

**1.** What is your gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

**2.**How old are you? ……..

**3.**Do you like studying English language? Yes ☐ No ☐

Justify your answer?

……
…….

……
…….

**4.**How do you see your level at English?

Low ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐

**5**.How do you see your English production?

Bad ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐

**6.**Do you find the session of written expression interesting?

Yes ☐ No ☐

**7.**Do you practice writing in English language at home ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

**8.**Does your teacher allow you to use Arabic in the classroom?

Yes ☐ No ☐

**9.**When your English teacher uses Arabic, does it helps you to understand?

Yes ☐ No ☐

**10.**When you are writing, do you think in :

Arabic ☐ English ☐

**11.** Do you try to translate your ideas and thoughts from Arabic to English during writing?

Yes ☐ No ☐

**12.**What do you do when you do not understand an English word?

a) I ask the teacher for translation ☐

b) I use my personal dictionary ☐

c) I just skip the word ☐

**13.**Do you think that Arabic Language use help you when you are writing?

Yes ☐ No ☐

**14.** what are the difficulties that you find when you are writing in English?

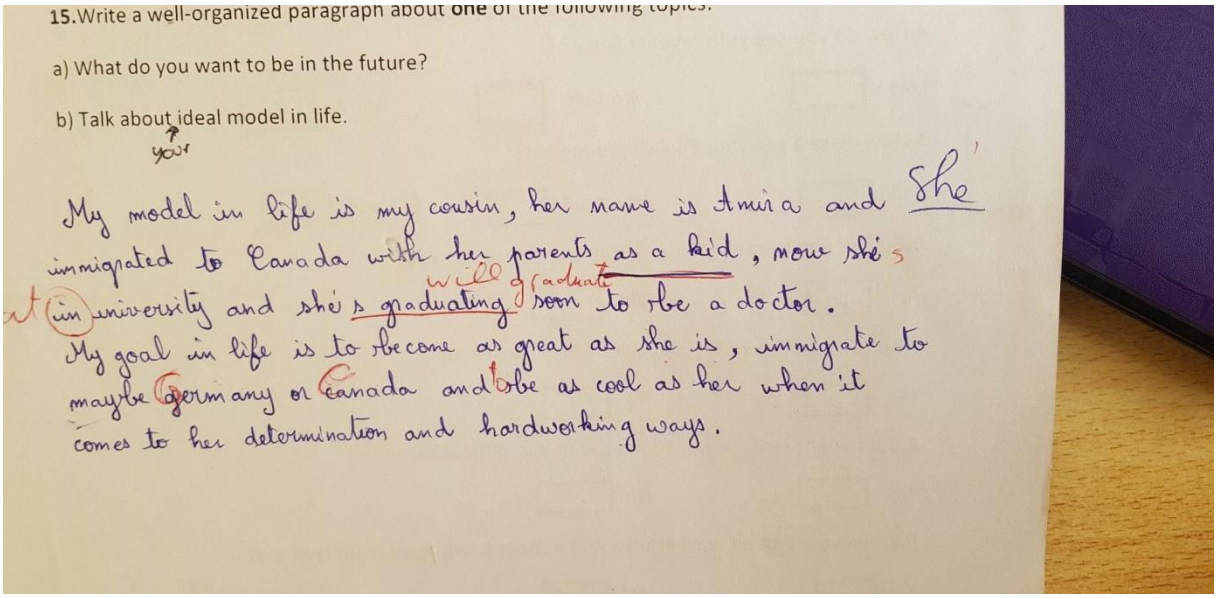
……
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**15.**Write a well-organized paragraph about **one** of the following topics:

a) What do you want to be in the future?

b) Talk about ideal model in life.

**Appendix 03 :**



15. Write a well-organized paragraph about **one** of the following topics:

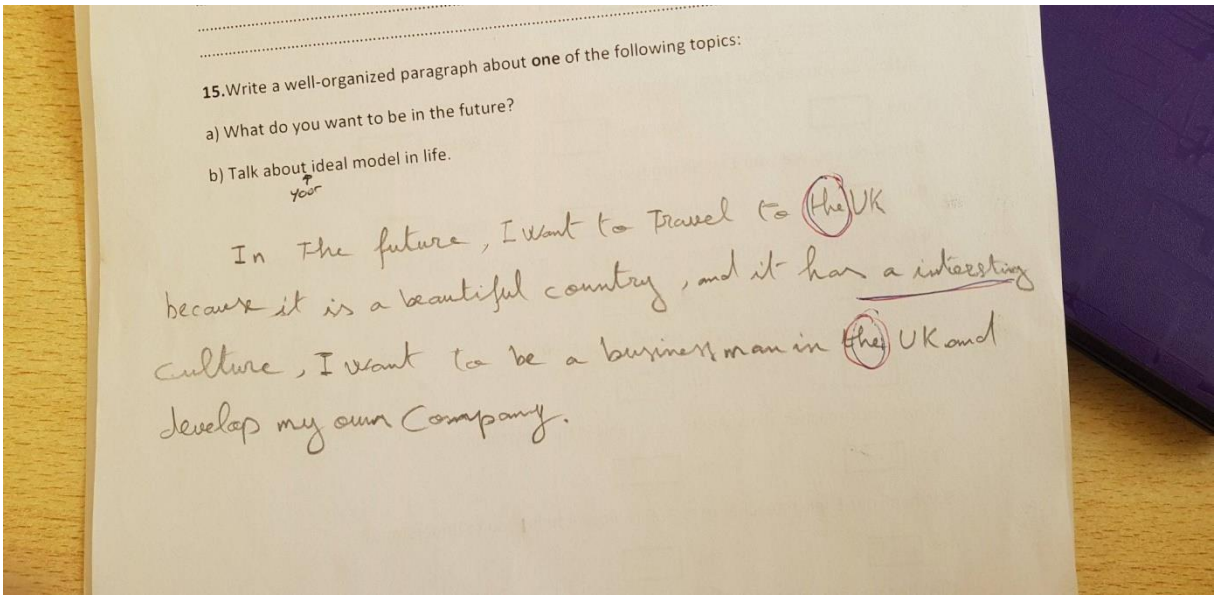
a) What do you want to be in the future?

b) Talk about ideal model in life.

your

My model in life is my cousin, her name is Amira and She immigrated to Canada with her parents as a kid, now she is in university and she's graduating will graduate soon to be a doctor. My goal in life is to become as great as she is, immigrate to maybe Germany or Canada and be as cool as her when it comes to her determination and hardworking ways.

## Appendix 04:



15.Write a well-organized paragraph about **one** of the following topics:

a) What do you want to be in the future?

b) Talk about ideal model in life.

In the future, I want to travel to the UK because it is a beautiful country, and it has a interesting culture, I want to be a businessman in the UK and develop my own company.